

Americans from Democrats' reckless tax-and-spending legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

NOMINATION OF MARGARET IRENE STRICKLAND

Mr. HEINRICH. Mr. President, I am quite pleased that the Senate will soon be voting on the confirmation of Margaret Strickland, President Biden's nominee to be a district court judge for the District of New Mexico.

Ms. Strickland was born and raised in the southwest border region where this district court seat presides. She attended New Mexico State University and the University of Texas at El Paso, before attending law school at New York University.

Ms. Strickland returned to the Southwest after law school and started her career with the Las Cruces Office of the New Mexico Public Defender, representing clients in the juvenile drug court and in felony defense work.

In 2011, Ms. Strickland formed her own law firm, continuing her public service work representing indigent defendants in Federal court. Ms. Strickland has litigated both criminal and civil cases, including a significant number in the Federal district court located in Las Cruces, NM. She has also appeared before the New Mexico Court of Appeals, the New Mexico Supreme Court, and the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals, and filed before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Ms. Strickland served on the board of the New Mexico Criminal Defense Lawyers for over a decade, including as its president. In 2018, the Federal District of New Mexico appointed her to represent all Criminal Justice Act lawyers as a panel representative.

Ms. Strickland has also done significant volunteer work with programs that reduce the rate of euthanasia for companion animals. She and her husband Greg foster dogs and puppies set for euthanasia so the dogs can be placed in a home.

If confirmed, Ms. Strickland will be faced with one of the biggest Federal dockets in the country and inheriting a very heavy backlog of cases.

I am, however, confident that her experience and her incredible work ethic will best position her to immediately get to work.

Ms. Strickland is a highly qualified nominee with the right experience, the right temperament, and the right disposition to be a fairminded district court judge. The ABA agrees, giving her a majority "well qualified" rating.

She has spent her entire professional career working in the community in which she will sit. She knows intimately the impact that the legal system has on everyday Americans, and she understands that serving as a judge is very different from serving as an advocate.

She is ready and prepared to shift from zealously and effectively representing clients to faithfully applying the law to the facts of a specific case.

Both before and after her nomination was announced, New Mexicans called my office in favor of Ms. Strickland. I heard from judges, from prosecutors, from defense attorneys, and everyday New Mexicans. All of them called to say how much they believe in Ms. Strickland. Like those New Mexicans who called into my office, I believe Ms. Strickland belongs on the bench, and I am ready to cast my vote and help her get there.

I enthusiastically support Ms. Strickland's nomination for district court judge for the District of New Mexico, and I hope that all of my colleagues will join me in confirming this highly qualified nominee.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Executive Calendar No. 231, Margaret Irene Strickland, of New Mexico, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Mexico.

Charles E. Schumer, Martin Heinrich, Alex Padilla, Margaret Wood Hassan, Raphael Warnock, Ben Ray Lujan, Gary C. Peters, Elizabeth Warren, Christopher Murphy, Tammy Duckworth, Patrick J. Leahy, Sheldon Whitehouse, Michael F. Bennet, Tim Kaine, Tammy Baldwin, Cory A. Booker, Sherrod Brown.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Margaret Irene Strickland, of New Mexico, to be United States District Judge for the District of New Mexico, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 52, nays 46, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 367 Ex.]

YEAS—52

Baldwin	Hassan	Murray
Bennet	Heinrich	Ossoff
Blumenthal	Hickenlooper	Padilla
Booker	Hirono	Peters
Brown	Kaine	Reed
Cantwell	Kelly	Rosen
Cardin	King	Sanders
Carper	Klobuchar	Schatz
Casey	Leahy	Schumer
Collins	Lujan	Shaheen
Cooms	Manchin	Sinema
Cortez Masto	Markey	Smith
Duckworth	Menendez	Stabenow
Durbin	Merkley	Tester
Gillibrand	Murkowski	
Graham	Murphy	

Van Hollen
Warner

Warnock
Warren

Whitehouse
Wyden

NAYS—46

Barrasso
Blackburn
Blunt
Boozman
Braun
Burr
Capito
Cassidy
Cornyn
Cotton
Cramer
Crapo
Cruz
Daines
Ernst
Fischer

Grassley
Hagerty
Hawley
Hoeven
Hyde-Smith
Inhofe
Johnson
Kennedy
Lankford
Lee
Lummis
Marshall
McConnell
Moran
Paul
Portman

Risch
Romney
Rubio
Sasse
Scott (FL)
Scott (SC)
Shelby
Sullivan
Thune
Tillis
Toomey
Tuberville
Wicker
Young

NOT VOTING—2

Feinstein

Rounds

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LUJÁN). The yeas are 52, the nays are 46.

The motion is agreed to.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:36 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. SINEMA).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Tennessee.

HONORING STAFF SERGEANT RYAN KNAUSS

Mr. HAGERTY. Madam President, I have come to the floor of the Senate today on behalf of myself and the senior Senator from Tennessee, MARSHA BLACKBURN, to honor the life and legacy of a heroic Tennessean, U.S. Army SSG Ryan Knauss, who was killed in a terrorist attack while serving the country that he loves so in Afghanistan on August 26, 2021.

Staff Sergeant Knauss served with the Army's 9th Psychological Operations Battalion, 8th Psychological Operations Group at Fort Bragg. He was from Corryton, TN—a small, rural community where love of country and volunteerism runs deep.

Corryton is known for being the hometown of country music star Kenny Chesney, and now it will be known forever as the home of our hero, SSG Ryan Knauss.

Ryan was 23 years old when he laid his life down for his Nation. I have spoken with Staff Sergeant Knauss's widow Alena and his father Greg. Through our conversations, I got to know a little bit more about Staff Sergeant Knauss. And I am here today to share with you all and with the American people just who Staff Sergeant Knauss was.

He was a devoted husband. Ryan met Alena when they were in high school working at a local pizza parlor. I sensed her deep love for Ryan when we spoke, and I am certain that Alena feels blessed to have had the opportunity to be loved by someone like Ryan.

He was a loyal son. After speaking with Ryan's father Greg, it was clear the love and the commitment that SSG Ryan Knauss had for his family and his fellow soldiers was unwavering.

I can only tell you that after hearing of Ryan's dedication to his family and his country, it is the hope and prayer of every parent to have a son as honorable and principled as Ryan. As a father, I told Greg I couldn't fathom his grief.

Ryan had hoped to soon become a father himself. He and Alena had plans to try for their first child when he came back from overseas. And building a nursery was at the top of their to-do list when he was to arrive home.

Staff Sergeant Knauss was a steadfast friend. His own friend spoke of his charm and intelligence at a memorial service at his former high school in Corryton. He was a charismatic person to whom people were instantly drawn.

SSG Ryan Knauss was a proud and honorable soldier. And when his country needed him at such a dire time, he fiercely answered the call.

Even as a child, Ryan knew his calling was to serve. In a friend's elementary school yearbook, Ryan wrote that he wanted to serve in the U.S. Armed Forces. And as a freshman in high school, he signed up for the ROTC program. As one of his fellow soldiers explained, "This was his dream job, and he . . . ran with it."

Ryan's unit, Detachment 10, described it as follows:

Ryan knew the dangerous situation he was going to, but protecting innocent civilians is one of the values that drove him. It has been said that life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives, and Ryan had an incredible impact on his family and friends. And thanks to his actions, thousands of children will have the joy of knowing a childhood free from danger and oppression.

The Bible teaches us that no one has "greater love than this, than to lay down one's life for one's friends." Staff Sergeant Knauss did just that. He died a hero's death. He made the ultimate sacrifice for his Nation, for all of us.

Ryan will be remembered as a selfless and heroic man—a Tennessee volunteer—who, with a servant's heart, gave everything of himself at just 23 years old for the country that he loved so dearly.

I ask that each of you here today join me in continuing to pray for the Knauss family and uplift them in the coming days and months as they lay their soldier to rest at Arlington National Cemetery.

AFGHANISTAN

Madam President, from the moment that President Biden announced the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in April, the people of the United States—after two decades of war—had hoped to mark the end of our presence in Afghanistan with a secure and orderly exit and with our honor intact.

As we know, what ensued proved to be the opposite. Hubris fueled the administration to proceed with a flawed

exit plan from Afghanistan. They allowed a calendar to dictate our withdrawal rather than the conditions on the ground. Loss of life and humiliation have been the result, with our allies and our partners openly questioning the resolve and the competency of the United States.

Those harrowing images of Afghan teenagers falling from the sky after clinging to a U.S. military plane as it took off from the Kabul airport, the utter chaos at the gates of the Kabul airport, and the loss of 13 U.S. service-members, including Staff Sergeant Knauss, would compel any reasonable person to ask why events had to unfold in this manner.

Against the operational failure in Afghanistan and this loss of credibility abroad, we are fortunate in knowing that the people of the United States still retain their unique spirit—that American desire to come to the aid of others in need.

Those Americans stranded in Afghanistan, the former Afghan interpreters who stood with our military, Afghan women and children who worked with our aid organizations—these people needed our help, and our servicemembers, our diplomats, our aid workers, and journalists all deserve recognition and credit for their sacrifice as they attempted to help.

TRIBUTE TO STAFF

Madam President, I want to take this opportunity to highlight another group of Americans who rarely receive the public recognition they deserve, the staff right here in the U.S. Senate. These staffers shun the spotlight and dedicate their craft to represent the interests of our constituents.

When it became clear that the administration was failing in Afghanistan, congressional staffers from across Capitol Hill—from both parties in Washington and in State offices and district offices around the country—rose to the challenge. These staffers helped with a modern-day "Digital Dunkirk." They were united in the common cause of helping stranded Americans and Afghan allies. Many of them sprung to action instinctively and in an instant, almost as if they had been on call, like a doctor or a firefighter, immediately ready to help mitigate the damage of this disaster.

Some of those who did this work serve on my staff: Bobby Zarate, my national security advisor, spent countless hours engaging with counterparts in the State Department, communicating with Active-Duty military and veterans, including some on the ground in Afghanistan, and, of course, fielding requests from all corners to expedite cases of American citizens and allies in Afghanistan; Kevin Kim, a fellow in my office from the State Department; Rachel Leong, a legislative correspondent; and Bonny Warren, a case-worker in my Cookeville office. They were all right there, too, every step of the way.

For their work on behalf of folks in need, I want to thank them for all that they do and all they continue to do.

I imagine many of my colleagues here in the Senate have similar stories, their own Bobbys, their own Kevins, and Rachels, and Bonnys helping those in need. And for the totality of their work, we, the Members of the Senate, owe our staff a great thanks.

I am honored to describe the role that my office played and is continuing to play in rescuing Americans from Afghanistan, but it didn't have to be this way. And I hope, for the sake of our government and our country, that it will never be this way again.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator MURPHY and I be allowed to complete our exchange before the next scheduled vote.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2770

Mr. COTTON. Madam President, after Joe Biden's disastrous retreat from Afghanistan, the country has fallen to a medieval band of degenerate savages known as the Taliban.

Despite its depraved behavior, you won't hear anyone in our government call the Taliban what it is: a terrorist organization. Instead, Secretary of State Blinken has said, for example, that the Taliban "does not meet the test of inclusivity." It is as if the Biden administration is more concerned that the Taliban is led by men than that it is led by terrorists.

This administration has refused to declare that the Taliban is a foreign terrorist organization, perhaps because the President outsourced the security of American citizens to the Taliban last month and stood by as it took over a country of nearly 40 million people.

Once again, the Biden administration is putting image, public relations, before everything else. It refuses to acknowledge that the Afghan retreat was anything but an "extraordinary success," as Joe Biden has called it. And now it is refusing to call terrorists "terrorists."

But the truth is obvious. If the Taliban isn't a foreign terrorist organization, what is? The State Department's terrorism list includes groups like Shining Path, the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist guerillas in Peru, and Aum Shinrikyo, the Japanese doomsday cult.

If the State Department can go to the trouble of designating those groups as terrorist organizations, surely they can do the same for a band of jihadists whose hands are dripping with American blood.

Indeed, the Taliban matches to a tee the definition for foreign terrorist organization under U.S. law. That law sets out three criteria: First, it must be a foreign organization. I would assume the Biden administration would